MIDDLE EAST AND SOUTH ASIA REVIEW

24 FEBRUARY 1983

PLO Affairs

Fatah Central Committee member Salah Khalaf has stated that the PLO is ready to accept President Reagan's peace plan if the United States declares its recognition of the Palestinians' right to self-determination, KUNA reported citing Khalaf's remarks to U.S. correspondents in Algiers. The PLO official was quoted as saying that if the United States supports the Palestinians' right to self-determination, the PLO leadership would be willing "to step aside" and allow the West Bank mayors "to negotiate with Washington or Israel," KUNA added.

Voice of PLO radios have not reported Khalaf's remarks.

Commenting on the Palestine National Council (PNC) session, Nayif Hawatimah, secretary general of the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine, affirmed that the PNC's political program is a victory for national unity and that it is now possible to resolve the political problems which have occurred recently in Palestinian ranks, according to WAM. A Baghdad Voice of PLO analysis said that the PNC session ended with a feeling of "high responsibility" and "unprecedented democracy." The radio reiterated that the Reagan plans does not recognize the Palestinian people's right to self-determination and pointed out that the PLO endorsed the Fes summit plan because the Palestinians are part of the Arab people and cannot be separated from Arab realities. Meanwhile, Riyadh radio noted the PNC's adoption of a number of "important" decisions and described the endorsement of the Fes summit plan as "one of the most outstanding resolutions." The radio asserted that the "tense atmosphere" during some of the PNC debates confirms that the PNC resolutions were formulated in a democratic atmosphere "devoid of emotion, anger, or any kind of pressure."

Egypt

Foreign Minister Kamal Hasan 'Ali denied that Egypt and Israel have set a date for a resumption of talks on outstanding problems, MENA reported.

Israel

Israeli Reaction to Reagan Offer -- Israeli Prime Minister Begin rejected President Reagan's offer of security guarantees for Israel's border with Lebanon, declaring that Israel wants "security arrangements, not guarantees," Jerusalem radio reported citing Begin's remarks to the Jewish war veterans convention in Jerusalem. The radio said earlier that the issue of U.S. guarantees was actually a "misunderstanding blown out of proportion." The radio added that during Defense Minister Arens' meeting with national security adviser William Clark the latter affirmed that there has been neither a change in U.S. policy nor any new U.S. proposal.

Lebanon

Lebanese presidential envoy Jean 'Ubayd returned to Beirut from Damascus on 24 February after holding talks with "senior Syrian officials," Voice of Lebanon radio announced. An earlier Radio Monte Carlo report disclosed that 'Ubayd held "secret contacts" with Syrian Foreign Minister 'Abd al-Halim Khaddam and discussed matters related to the Lebanese-Israeli negotiations. In another development Jordanian Foreign Minister Marwan al-Qasim arrived in Beirut on 24 February and will convey a message from King Husayn to President al-Jumayyil on the Arab and international situations, the Voice of Lebanon reported.

Oil Affairs

OPEC oil ministers will meet next week "to discuss cutting oil prices," and if they fail to agree on a price reduction the UAE, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Qatar, and Iraq will unilaterally reduce oil prices, UAE Petroleum Minister Mani' ibn Sa'id al'Utaybah announced in a statement reported by WAKH. Nevertheless, the Gulf oil states "will not enter into a price war" and will intervene to prevent such a war, Saudi Petroleum Minister Yamani stressed in an interview reported by KUNA. The Gulf states "have enough weight and power to make others think twice before beginning a price war," he said. The Saudi and UAE statements followed further meetings in Riyadh in which the Saudi, UAE, Kuwaiti, and Qatari ministers were joined by their Iraqi counterpart, according to Riyadh radio and SPA. Yamani subsequently held talks with visiting Libyan Oil Minister al-Maqhur, who not only outlined Libya's position but also presented the views of Iran and Algeria, KUNA reported.

Libya

Hijackers Surrender -- The hijackers of a Libyan passenger plane surrendered to Maltese authorities and all passengers and crew emerged unharmed, JANA reported. Two dissident Libyan Army officers who staged the hijacking have been placed under the jurisdiction of Maltese authorities and can choose their next destination. Five other Libyans who joined the hijackers will be repatriated to Libya, according to a Maltese Government spokesman's statement reported by AFP.

Arab Unity Call -- Commemorating the anniversary of the Egyptian-Syrian unity experiment of 1958, Libya's "Revolutionary Command" issued a statement transmitted by JANA affirming Libyan readiness "to immediately start unity procedure with any progressive Arab regime or faction" on the sole condition that this unity serve the interests of the "masses" and channel all its capabilities toward the liberation of Palestine. The statement called on Algeria and Tunisia to take steps toward unity with Libya and suggested an urgent meeting between the Libyan and Syrian leaderships to implement unity agreements.

Response to Mubarak Allegation -- Responding to Egyptian President Husni Mubarak's claim that Libyan planes recently violated Egyptian airspace, JANA asserted that if Libyan planes had indeed entered Egyptian airspace, "this would have been an honor for Egypt." Libyan aircraft defended Egyptian airspace in the October war and the Egyptian people "will celebrate" when Libyan planes return to protect Egypt's airspace, JANA declared.

Iran

"Hypocrites" attacked a bus carrying revolution guards in Esfahan, killing 2 and wounding 11 others, according to a Revolution Guards Corps statement broadcast by Esfahan radio.

Afghanistan

Two strong explosions shook central Kabul on 22 February after an unusually heavy night of shooting in the capital, AFP reported citing a diplomatic source in Islamabad.

FBIS DAILY REPORT

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COORDINATING BUREAU DISCUSSES MEMBERSHIP REQUESTS

AU181220 Belgrade TANJUG in English 1020 GMT 16 Feb 83

[Text] United Nations, February 16 (TANJUG) -- The Nonaligned Coordinating Bureau, in its capacity as ad hoc committee on preparations for the seventh nonaligned summit, met here on Tuesday to discuss requests submitted by a number of countries to join the Movement of Nonalignment as members, or to obtain the observer or guest status in it.

The bureau is reported to have recommended the ministerial meeting in New Delhi to accept the requests of the Bahamas, Barbados and Colombia and to admit the three countries as full members of the movement.

Addressing the meeting, the Yugoslav representative, Ambassador Ignac Golob pointed out that the admission of the three countries to the Nonaligned Movement demonstrates a strengthening of the policy of nonalignment. We expect that the new members of our movement will give their full contribution to the principles and aims of nonalignment in the struggle for peace, security and development, he said.

Pointing to the fact that the countries concerned have a long tradition of struggle for political and economic independence, sovereignty and against foreign domination, Ambassador Golob said their joining of the movement constitutes another proof of the fact that nonalignment is becoming the predominant trend in Latin America and the Caribbean.

Venezuela, which also applied for joining the movement, is understood to have sent, at the last moment, a letter to the Coordinating Bureau asking it not to consider its request in view of the situation in its territorial dispute with Guyana.

Cuban Ambassador Raul Roa, who chaired the meeting, stated he shared the view of the Coordinating Bureau when saying that the bureau would take steps in the near future to facilitate Venezuela's entry into the Nonaligned Movement. Members of the bureau upheld the statement.

The Coordinating Bureau also recommended that Antigua be granted the observer status in the Movement of Nonalignment. A request to this effect was also submitted by Honduras, but it was turned down after a discussion in which a dozen speakers took part, pointing out that any observer country must be guided in its foreign policy by the principles of the policy of nonalignment and be in a position to give a real contribution to the strengthening of that policy, the movement and its common struggle. Honduras does not comply with these criteria.

The Coordinating Bureau also recommended that the Dominican Republic's request for the guest status in the movement be favourably considered.

In conclusion, the bureau endorsed that draft agenda for a meeting of senior government officials and ambassadors opening in Delhi on March 1, while India, as host to the summit, circulated a draft containing the plan of action to be adopted by the seventh summit.

This was the last meeting of the Nonaligned Coordinating Bureau in New York, in its capacity as ad hoc committee on preparations for the summit.

It is generally held that the committee has successfully completed its task. Further action will now be transferred to New Delhi.

MINISTRY SPOKESMAN REJECTS TALKS WITH REBELS

LD231809 Kabul Domestic Service in Dari 1600 GMT 23 Feb 83

[Text] Western news agencies recently spread the rumor that the DRA Government has agreed to the UN secretary general's representative carrying out talks in Peshawar with the leaders of the rebel bands.

In reply to a BAKHTAR correspondent's question, a Ministry of Foreign Affairs spokesman described this as unfounded, far from the truth, and fanciful and resolutely rejected it.

The spokesman said such news is pure fabrication, manufactured by the imperialist and reactionary fabricating and propaganda machinery, who want to give courage to the counterrevolutionary elements in their criminal and terrorist actions and thus make them happy with fanciful thoughts.

The DRA Government would never agree that any manner of talks could be held with the enemies of the revolution -- these elements are traitors to the interests of the people and homeland and mercenaries of imperialism and reaction.

TWO 'STRONG EXPLOSIONS' SHAKE KABUL 22 FEB

BK231023 Hong Kong AFP in English 1006 GMT 23 Feb 83

[Text] Islamabad, Feb 23 (AFP) -- Two strong explosions shook central Kabul yesterday morning after a night of heavier than usual shooting throughout the capital, a Western diplomatic source said here today.

The source said the explosions might have been attacks on Radio Kabul and on a bank in the Microrayon District where Soviet advisers are quartered. It was not known if the blasts left any casualties.

The Afghan Army was put on alert in Kabul last week in order to prevent anti-Soviet demonstrations on the anniversary of mass protests on February 21 and 22, 1980, 2 months after Soviet troops occupied the country.

Western diplomats reported that numerous Kabul residents took to the rooftops on Monday evening chanting the Moslem insurgents battle cry of "Allah o akbar, "God is the greatest". However a strike call for yesterday appeared to have gone unheeded, though the rebels had widely circulated leaflets through the town. A resistance source in the Pakistani border town of Peshawar said a few days ago that special teams had been sent into Kabul to organize bombings and other attacks to mark the 1980 protests.

KARACHI REPORTS 'INTENSIFIED' REBEL ACTIVITY

BK190812 Karachi Domestic Service in Urdu 0200 GMT 19 Feb 83

[Text] According to reports, the mujahidin have intensified their activities in Qandahar Province. They recently launched five attacks against Soviet and Karmal regime soldiers. During the clashes, the Afghan mujahidin damaged five tanks, one armored car, and two military trucks. A number of Karmal soldiers were killed while they were conducting a search operation.

Another report says the mujahidin on 9 February destroyed the office of the Khalq faction of the ruling party with grenades and rocket launchers in Qandahar town. A severe clash flared up in Spin Buldak Subdivision of Qandahar on 5 February, in which the Soviet and Karmal soldiers suffered heavy losses.

'COUNTERREVOLUTIONARIES' CAPTURED, 'CRUSHED'

Nangarhar, Qonduz

LD201929 Kabul Domestic Service in Dari 1600 GMT 20 Feb 83

[Text] Counterrevolutionary elements, who intended to disrupt the peace and security of the toiling people of (Abdol Khalil) area in Nangarhar Province, were captured with their criminal ringleader by the officers and troops of the Nangarhar Province military command. A source in that command reported that 20 assorted weapons with ammunition, two rocket launchers, and antitank mines were seized from these saboteurs.

According to another report from Qonduz Province, more counterrevolutionary elements were crushed with their ringleader by the name of (Mullah) in Rostaq village, 'Aliabad Subdistrict; four of them were captured with their weapons.

Nangarhar, Faryab

LD240708 Kabul BAKHTAR in English 0419 GMT 24 Feb 83

[Text] Kabul, Feb. 23, BAKHTAR -- A group of counterrevolutionaries was crushed and 45 of them were captured alive in Achin, Chaperhar Koot Croshta and Kama areas in Nangarhar Province by the security forces of that province recently.

Over 200 units of different arms, 5,000 bullets, 2 rocket launchers, antitanks and antipersonnel mines, and 2 loudspeakers were seized from them.

In the course of another operation, 22 counterrevolutionaries and their ringleader Hafiz were captured alive in the villages of Shereen Tagab District of Faryab Province by the security forces and operative battalion of that province recently. One rocket launcher, a number of arms, hand grenades, two thousand bullets, one vehicle and one motorcycle were recovered from them.

In the course of another operation, three boxes of [word indistinct] bullets, eleven bullets of rocket launcher were recovered by the security forces of Kiran and Monjan Districts Badakhshan Province in the villages of that district recently.

SOVIET RED ARMY 65TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATED

LD231831 Kabul Domestic Service in Dari 1600 GMT 23 Feb 83

[Text] A reception was given this evening at the USSR Embassy in Kabul on the occasion of the 65th anniversary of the founding of the USSR's Red Army.

This reception, given by the USSR Embassy's military attache, was attended by Soltan 'Ali Keshtmand, member of the PDPA Central Committee Politburo and chairman of the DRA Council of Ministers; members of the Party Central Committee Politburo and Secretariat; members of the Council of Ministers; generals and high-ranking Army officers; high-ranking party and government officials; and ambassadors, charges d'affaires, and military attaches of friendly countries in Kabul.

According to another report, the 65th anniversary of the founding of the USSR Red Army was marked by meetings in the capital and provinces. At a meeting held on this occasion yesterday in the conference hall of the Ministry of National Defense, Brigadier General Mohammad Yasin Sadeqi, head of the Army's political affairs, spoke comprehensively about the USSR Army and its successes in the great patriotic war and the civil wars in the USSR and its international assistance. This meeting also was attended by officers of the Ministry of National Defense headquarters and of units of friendly USSR forces.

REPORTAGE ON NEPALESE PRIME MINISTER'S VISIT

18 February Arrival

BK180913 Dhaka Domestic Service in Bengali 0830 GMT 18 Feb 83

[Excerpt] A hearty welcome was accorded Nepalese Prime Minister Surya Bahadur Thapa when he arrived in Dhaka this morning on a 3-day official visit at the invitation of Chief Martial Law Administrator Lieutenant General H.M. Ershad. A 19-gun salute heralded the arrival of the Nepalese guest. Gen Ershad was the first to receive the Nepalese prime minister and Mrs Thapa. Two small children presented a bouquet of flowers.

Ershad-Thapa Talks

BK191416 Dhaka Domestic Service in English 1205 GMT 19 Feb 83

[Text] Bangladesh and Nepal have agreed that cooperation among countries of South Asia is a very important factor for peace and stability in the region and the world as a whole. (?This was stated during) the formal talks between the chief martial law administrator [CMLA], Lieutenant General H.M. Ershad, and the visiting Nepalese prime minister, Mr Surya Bahadur Thapa, in Dhaka today.

They discussed the progress being made by the India-Bangladesh joint rivers commission and sharing of the Ganges waters and agreed that Bangladesh and Nepal should remain in close consultation on the subject. Other areas of bilateral cooperation, including transit and warehouse facilities in Chittagong, also came up for discussion.

A Foreign Office spokesman said discussions between the two leaders centered mainly on the next nonaligned summit, with particular reference to Afghanistan and Kampuchea. The CMLA explained that every effort will be made to restore the original, moderate, and centrist character of the Nonaligned Movement. He expressed with confidence that Bangladesh and Nepal will continue to contribute toward strengthening the movement.

On international issues, the CMLA gave a brief account of his recent visits to China, Kuwait, Morocco, France, and Jordan. Explaining Bangladesh's position on the Middle East and the Gulf war, Gen Ershad said Bangladesh would try to bring an end to the war.

The Nepalese prime minister apprised the CMLA of his talks with the leaders of Pakistan, India, and the U.S.A., which he visited before arriving in Dhaka. Mr Surya Bahadur Thapa also thanked Bangladesh for her initiative in the South Asian forum and expressed satisfaction at the progress it has made so far.

The hour-long meeting was marked by an atmosphere of utmost cordiality and friendship.

The CMLA was aided at the talks among others by Foreign Minister A.R. Shamsud Doha, Finance Minister A.N.A. Muhith, Agriculture Minister A.Z.M. Obaidullah Khan, principal staff officer to the CMLA Major General Muzammel Hussain, secretary, external resources division, (?Hafizur Rahman), and Foreign Secretary Ataul Karim.

The Nepalese prime minister was assisted among others by Foreign and Water Resources Minister Pad Bahadur Khatri, Nepalese Ambassador to Bangladesh Gehendra Bahadur Rajbhandari, and Foreign Secretary (Jan Singh Shrestra).

Banquet Remarks

BK190953 Dhaka Domestic Service in English 0145 GMT 19 Feb 83

[Excerpt] The chief martial law administrator [CMLA], Lieutenant General H.M. Ershad, has said regional cooperation is one of the effective and useful approaches for achieving development in a peaceful atmosphere. He said for us, peace is indispensable for economic and social development. He was speaking at a banquet given in honor of the visiting Nepalese prime minister, Mr Surya Bahadur Thapa, in Dhaka last night. He said Bangladesh is keen to expand and strengthen its bilateral relations with Nepal in all fields. We are happy to (?find) the same feeling among the leadership in Nepal. He said since the process of dialogue at the highest level was initiated some years ago, there has been a significant increase in the scope and content of our bilateral relations.

Gen Ershad expressed his satisfaction over the forceful support given by King Birendra to the efforts directed toward making South Asian cooperation a reality. We are happy that these efforts have generated the required momentum toward a realization of (?constructive) cooperation in South Asia. Gen Ershad expressed his confidence that the ideal of regional cooperation among the nations of this region would find [words indistinct].

Lt Gen Ershad said that the forthcoming nonaligned summit is being held at a time when the world is fraught with a critical situation. All of us therefore [word indistinct] all efforts to overcome this situation. He called for furthering the nonaligned unity and solidarity and make the summit a success. The CMLA said Bangladesh and Nepal have worked together in [word indistinct] to the lessening of international tension and to seek the best of relations and friendship with all countries of the world. In this context, the CMLA explained Bangladesh's stand on various world issues including the Middle East, Afghanistan, and Kampuchea.

The Nepalese prime minister, in his reply, said bilateral cooperation between his country and Bangladesh has markedly developed in recent times and the recently-held Nepal-Bangladesh joint economic commission meeting in Katmandu has been able to identify concrete areas of further cooperation. Mr Thapa referred to the importance his country attaches to cooperative ventures with her neighbors and said such ventures, carried on in a spirit of good neighborliness and solidarity, would certainly be in the mutual interest of the two countries.

The Nepalese prime minister, who arrived in Dhaka yesterday on a 3-day official visit, said his country has manifold ties of friendship with Bangladesh. Our geographical proximity, commitment to peace and development, and identical views on many vexing problems facing the world have established strong bonds of friendship between the two countries, he said. He appreciated the transit facilities offered by Bangladesh [words indistinct] to and from Nepal would greatly help in overseas trade and development efforts in general. Mr Thapa noted with satisfaction that the move for regional cooperation so tactfully initiated by Bangladesh has gathered momentum. As a result, he pointed out, an atmosphere of trust, confidence, and cooperation was building up gradually in the South Asian region. Nepal was prepared to go along with other countries of this region toward the realization of this goal.

20 February Departure

BK201421 Dhaka Domestic Service in English 1205 GMT 20 Feb 83

[Excerpts] The Nepalese prime minister, Mr Surya Bahadur Thapa, left Dhaka this afternoon for home at the end of his 3-day official visit to Bangladesh.

The chief martial law administrator, Lieutenant General H.M. Ershad, bade farewell to Prime Minister and Begum Thapa at the Zia International Airport. Cabinet ministers, diplomats, and civil and military officials as well as a large number of Nepalese nationals residing in Bangladesh were among those present at the airport to accord Mr Thapa a hearty sendoff.

Earlier, addressing a news conference, the Nepalese prime minister said his talks with Bangladesh leaders have been very fruitful and useful. The talks covered a wide range of subjects including bilateral matters and regional and various international issues of common concern. He described the bilateral relations between Bangladesh and Nepal as excellent and said that the two countries have been making a great contribution in different forums. He said (?they express similar views) on all important international issues.

Replying to a question, the Nepalese prime minister said that his country is always prepared to accord all possible support and cooperation for the harnessing of (?utilizing) water resources for the benefit of all the peoples of the region. The Nepalese prime minster expressed the hope that the South Asian forum, as visualized by Bangladesh, will come into being to the interests and the benefits of the countries of the region. He said the ministerial-level meeting will be held after the secretary-level meeting scheduled to be held in Dhaka next month. He described as gratifying to note that any cooperation needed by Nepal was readily extended to it by Bangladesh. In this connection, he mentioned the transit facilities being provided by Bangladesh for Nepal's import.

The Nepalese premier said wherever he went he found a tremendous amount of good will and respect for the friendly people and Government of Nepal. He expressed his gratitude for the warmth and hospitality extended to him and his delegation.

Joint Communique

BK201712 Katmandu External Service in English 1450 GMT 20 Feb 83

[Text] Prime Minister Surya Bahadur Thapa and Lieutenant General H.M. Ershad, the president of the Council of Ministers of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, have noted with satisfaction the continued development and consolidation of bilateral relations between Nepal and Bangladesh. This is stated in the joint communique published simultaneously in Katmandu and Dhaka today at the conclusion of the 3-day official visit to Bangladesh of Prime Minister Surya Bahadur Thapa at the invitation of president of the Council of Ministers of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, Lt Gen H.M. Ershad.

It is stated in the joint communique that they welcomed in particular the fact that since the process of dialogue at the highest level has been started, there had been a significant increase in bilateral cooperation to their mutual benefit.

The two leaders expressed satisfaction at the outcome of the recent meeting of the Bangladesh-Nepal joint economic commission, JEC, and stressed the need for the early implementation of its decisions.

AFP REPORTS 40 KILLED IN NEW ASSAM VIOLENCE

BK231445 Hong Kong AFP in English 1427 GMT 23 Feb 83

[Excerpt] Gauhati, Feb 23 (AFP) -- New battle lines were drawn today between anti-immigrant militants and Prime Minister Indira Gandhi's Congress-I Party on the formation of a new government in Assam amid new reports of violence in the northeast state that left 40 dead.

Militants today threatened to disrupt any new government formed on the basis of the just-completed elections, which sparked a three-week wave of bloodshed that officially left 1,127 people dead.

Eyewitnesses said that 40 Bengali Moslems were killed by Assamese in Nowgong District, where some 1,000 Bengalis were reported butchered in a massacre last week.

"The law and order situation here is bad," said Shiv Tiwari, Nowgong administrative chief.

Some sources said that the latest slayings were the work of Assamese natives acting alone while others said that they were backed by members of the state police.

RELIEF WORK BEGINS IN ASSAM; MOB ATTACKS CITED

BK240320 Delhi Domestic Service in English 0240 GMT 24 Feb 83

[Text] In Assam, relief and rehabilitation work in the affected areas has been intensified. About 30 tons of medicine have been rushed to the affected areas from Delhi. Foodstuffs and other relief material are being distributed in the relief camps.

According to official sources, one subinspector of police was killed when a mob attacked a police post in the (Samaburi) area. Another mob attacked some villagers at (Devijya) in the same police station area. The police opened fire at both places to disperse the unruly mobs. Two persons were killed at (Devijya) in the firing.

The adviser to the Assam governor, Mr R.V. Subramanian, said that the Army has been called out in two places in Mangaldai subdivision of Darrang District to assist civil authorities to maintain law and order. The state government is also taking steps to provide security and protection to candidates and others who participated in the just concluded elections. In Dibrugarh, life was reported to be normal yesterday.

The adviser to the Assam governor, Mr R.V. Subramaniam, has said that the preliminary analysis of the voting in the 80 constituencies available has shown that, on an average, 35 percent of the voters have exercised their franchise all over the state despite a difficult situation. The polling in Cachar District was over 60 percent, while it was over 40 percent in the Hill districts and nearly 55 percent in Goalpara districts. He said that over half of the 6,500 central government employees have been sent back by air to New Delhi until yesterday. Another 1,000 employees from Bihar have also gone back to their respective places by special trains. The remaining employees, who have come from outside, will be sent back in the next 3 days, Mr Subramaniam said.

WEST BENGAL WELCOMES GANDHI STAND ON ASSAM ISSUE

BK240459 Delhi Domestic Service in English 0240 GMT 24 Feb 83

[Text] The West Bengal chief minister, Mr Jyoti Basu, has welcomed Prime Minister Mrs Gandhi's announcement on the center's stand on 1971 as a cutoff year for detecting foreigners in Assam. Speaking to newsmen in Calcutta, he said he also favors the decision to set up a tribunal to detect the foreigners as stated by the union home minister in parliament. Our Calcutta correspondent reports that the influx of refugees from different districts of Assam continues unabated into West Bengal.

ASSAM ELECTION RESULTS UPDATED 24 FEBRUARY

BK240342 Delhi Domestic Service in English 0240 GMT 24 Feb 83

[Text] In Assam, the Congress-I has secured a 2/3 majority in a 126-member state assembly. The party has bagged 84 seats out of 98 results declared so far. Polling was incomplete in 17 constituencies while the election in Biswanath constituency has been countermanded due to the death of a candidate. The Congress-I has also bagged all four Lok Sabha seats including Dhubri. Two other Lok Sabha seats, Jorhat and the autonomous district, have also gone to the party. Among the left and democratic alliance constituents, the Communist Party of India, Communist Party of India-Marxist, and the Congress-S secured one seat each in the assembly elections. The Plains Tribal Council of Assam got three and independents eight. The newly-elected Congress-I member of the state assembly are to meet in Gauhati tomorrow to elect their leader.

MEASURES TO COUNTER COMMUNAL VIOLENCE PROPOSED

BK230934 Delhi Domestic Service in English 0830 GMT 23 Feb 83

[Text] A proposal to set up regular tribunals to deal with communal riots in the country is under active consideration of the government. Home Minister P.C. Sethi told the Lok Sabha during question time today that the administrative machinery is being strengthened and other measures taken to prevent such happenings in 142 districts which have been identified as riot prone areas. The house was informed that the center has issued comprehensive guidelines to the states to deal with communal tensions. Some socioeconomic studies of communal incidents have also been undertaken.

The minister said five more police battalions are to be raised for peace-keeping purposes during communal disturbances. This will be in addition to three such battalions now in operation. In response to the central guidelines, nine states have expressed the readiness to restructure the police force and to revamp the police training programs.

KERALA STATE BANS STRIKES IN ESSENTIAL SERVICES

BK240455 Delhi Domestic Service in English 0240 GMT 24 Feb 83

[Text] In Kerala, an ordinance has been promulgated to prohibit strikes in essential services. Under the ordinance, participation in an illegal strike will involve imprisonment up to 6 months or a fine up to 1,000 rupees or both. Strike also includes mass casual leave, refusal to work overtime, and any other conduct that is likely to result in cessation or substantial retardation of work in any essential service.

PRIME MINISTER COMMENTS ON URANIUM RESERVES

BK230929 Delhi Domestic Service in English 0830 GMT 23 Feb 83

[Text] The prime minister told the Lok Sabha that the estimated reserves of uranium in the country are considered adequate for the power program currently envisaged. Mrs Gandhi said, in reply to a question, that facilities for mining of uranium and for the fabrication of fuel are being augmented in a phased manner. She said India is self-sufficient in nuclear fuel except for the Tarapur atomic power station which uses enriched uranium.

In reply to another question, the prime minister said studies by the Bhabha Atomic Research Center have revealed that the cost of recovering uranium from sea water is rather high. The subject has been thoroughly examined and the work done in this regard in different countries has also been studied, she added.

LIBERATION ARMY REPORTEDLY RENEWS ACTIVITIES

BK200234 Hong Kong AFP in English 0227 GMT 20 Feb 83

[By Dilip Ganguly]

[Excerpt] New Delhi, Feb 20 (AFP) -- A liberation army, claiming support of all seven states in India's northeast, has renewed its activities after lying dormant for two years, federal intelligence officials in Assam's state capital Gauhati said.

Police last week arrested three members of the organization in Imphal, capital of the tiny Manipur state, bordering Burma. But the news of their arrest was eclipsed by the current violence in Assam.

Several hours of interrogation revealed that the organization was regrouping again, taking advantage of the situation in Assam and its possible fallout in other northeastern states, said the officials, who asked not to be identified by name.

The "Seven United Liberation Army" (SULA) was formed in March 1980 with the sole aim of "liberating the entire northeast from Indian colonialists." One month after its birth, the organization members hoisted red flags in prominent towns of the seven states and staked claims over them. The states where SULA claims to have support are Assam, Nagaland, Manipur, Meghlaya, Mizoram, Tripura and Arunachal Pradesh.

Interior Ministry officials in the Indian capital said they were aware of the development, but rejected apprehensions that the regrouping would pose any threat.

The organization was formed by merging secessionist groups in the northeastern region. However, the main strength was provided by the "People's Liberation Army" (PLA) formed in 1966. PLA members were reportedly trained in China and the organization styled its functioning to some extent after the Chinese PLA, Indian officials said.

Official sources estimate the strength of the SULA at only 2,000, but unofficial sources and local observers said it was too conservative a figure.

The SULA lost much of its strength after several of their ranking leaders were arrested last year. Indian Army units stationed in Manipur and Nagaland had grouped villages to flush out SULA activities and had succeeded in arresting or killing many of them in "encounters".

Federal officials said the SULA had lost much of its base and it was unlikely that their effort to regroup would succeed. But independent observers pointed out that with Assam state in the grip of an unprecedented violence, secessionist groups in the other states may unite and cause trouble.

The entire northeastern region, with a land area of 255,000 square kms (96,900 miles), is linked with India by a narrow land corridor, popularly called the "chicken neck". This is the only land link the Indian Army has for supplies.

GANDHI MEETS WITH INDONESIAN FOREIGN MINISTER

BK191437 Delhi General Overseas Service in English 1330 GMT 19 Feb 83

[Text] The Indonesian foreign minister, Dr Mokhtar Kusumaatmaja, called on the prime minister, Mrs Indira Gandhi, in New Delhi today. Dr Mokhtar is in the capital on a 2-day visit for talks on issues coming up at next month's nonaligned summit. He told newsmen on arrival yesterday that he has brought a message from President Suharto for Mrs Gandhi.

Dr Mokhtar Kusumaatmaja handed over a letter from President Suharto to Mrs Gandhi in New Delhi today. Dr Mokhtar is in the capital to explain the reasons why the Indonesian president will be unable to attend the next month's nonaligned summit.

An official spokesman said the Government of India fully understands the position and appreciates the Indonesian Government's gesture in sending a special envoy explaining the reasons. We look upon it as being in keeping with the warm, cordial, and friendly relations between India and Indonesia, he said.

EXPANDING TIES DISCUSSED WITH ROMANIAN OFFICIAL

BK190730 Delhi Domestic Service in English 1530 GMT 18 Feb 83

[Text] India and Romania have agreed to further expand their bilateral relations and economic cooperation. At a meeting between the commerce minister, Mr Vishwanath Pratap Singh, and the visiting Romanian trade minister, Mr Alexandru Rosu, in New Delhi today, the two sides also agreed to explore the possibilities of joint ventures including projects in third countries. Some of the areas identified include steel and petrochemicals.

KARACHI SITUATION REPORTED 'PEACEFUL, NORMAL'

BK231551 Karachi Domestic Service in Urdu 1500 GMT 23 Feb 83

[Text] A press note issued by the Sind Government in Karachi this evening says that the situation throughout the day was peaceful and normal and no untoward incident was reported from any part of the city. According to the press note, scattered incidents of stone throwing were reported from the west district -- where the curfew is in force -- when it was relaxed for 2 hours from 1400 to 1600. Some people were arrested for violating the curfew. The press note adds that business in other parts of the city continued normally.

Another press note says more institutions and [words indistinct] have been exempted from curfew regulations.

Curfew To Be Relaxed

BK240843 Karachi Overseas Service in Urdu 0800 GMT 24 Feb 83

[Text] It was announced officially in Karachi today that curfew in the areas under District West, [word indistinct], Najimabad and Pak Colony police stations will be lifted from 1400 this afternoon. The curfew in the District West Baghicha will be relaxed for 2 hours from 1400 to 1600. The administration has directed people living in the Karachi District West not to go out during curfew hours, even though they possess curfew passes, except en route to or from their workplaces.

ADVISORY COUNCIL MEMBERS APPEAL FOR LAW, ORDER

BK231621 Karachi Domestic Service in Urdu 1500 GMT 23 Feb 83

[Excerpt] All members of the Federal Advisory Council belonging to Karachi and all female members of the council have appealed to all the people in Karachi to help restore law and order in the city. Addressing a press conference on behalf of these members, (Obaidur Rahman) said that some interested elements and foreign agents are instigating the Karachi incidents to retard the process of implementation of the Islamic system in the country. He said these people could be foiled by maintaining communal harmony and peace and order in the name of Islam and the security and solidarity of the country.

(Allama Majidul Ishtihadi) and (Allame Sayed Mohammad Hoti) appealed to the people to shun hatred and to restore law and order. They urged the government to take strong notice of (?reports) aimed at spreading sectarian hatred. Female members appealed to all sections to act with understanding and magnanimity. Other members of the council belonging to other parts of the country also participated in the press conference held at the council's Secretariat.

YAQUB KHAN DISCUSSES CONTACTS ON AFGHAN ISSUE

GF201204 Dubayy KHALEEJ TIMES in English 20 Feb 83 p 3

[By Maruf Khawaja]

[Text] Pakistan's Foreign Minister Sahabzada Yaqub Ali Khan yesterday expressed guarded optimism over the transition of intermittent contacts between parties in the Afghanistan issue to indirect negotiations under the United Nations auspices which are expected to begin in mid-April in Geneva.

Mr Yaqub Khan told newsmen during a brief stop-over in Dubai early yesterday morning while on his way home from official visits to Amman and Baghdad that progress had been made in trying to define with greater precision the main elements of a comprehensive settlement sought by Pakistan.

He said hopes of advancing on the road to a meaningful dialogue on one of the world's most intractable international problems had been raised with the recent visit to Kabul by special UN representative, Mr Cordovez. He replied in the affirmative when asked if Pakistan shared Mr Cordovez's optimism after talks with officials of the Babrak Karmal regime which reportedly helped clear the deck for the negotiations to begin in Geneva.

If Mr Cordovez was hopeful, "so are we", the minister said. "We don't expect spectacular results but progress has obviously been made in trying to define with greater precision the main elements of a comprehensive settlement which must be discussed and thrashed out at Geneva."

The definition sought was concerned with "the inter-relationship between elements such as withdrawal of Soviet forces from Afghanistan, the return home of about three million refugees from Pakistan, international guarantees and also commitments of non-interference by all parties concerned. By inference, therefore, the question of Soviet withdrawal would be taken up simultaneously with the return of refugees, issues that the Afghan regime has hitherto been unwilling to connect.

Mr Yaqub Khan categorically ruled out recognition by Pakistan of the Karmal regime "before during or after the negotiations for a settlement." The talks in Geneva, he said, would be conducted in the same indirect medium in which they had been conceived.

In answer to another question, he said Iran's position on the recognition issue was identical to Pakistan's but its talks [as published] varied somewhat on the Geneva talks. Iran had reservations about participation, but it was nevertheless kept informed about the latest developments.

Asked if his government had formulated a particular approach to the Afghan issue for the forthcoming non-aligned summit conference in New Delhi, the foreign minister said Pakistan's position was well known. It had been reiterated often enough at various international forums of which the Non-Aligned Movement was one. He said the Delhi summit would consider the Afghan issue as one of several matters of international concern such as the Middle East problem, the Iran-Iraq war, the North-South dialogue and others. The summit on the whole was expected to make a useful contribution towards a better understanding of current issues and perhaps identify areas of progress towards their resolution. Pakistan, of course, would make known its view of the latest developments on Afghanistan.

Asked if at the Delhi summit the views of the movement towards the Afghan issue might be brought closer to the unequivocal stand taken by the Islamic Conference Organisation, he said the non-aligned forum being a much broader one sought to formulate its views by consensus, which was reflected in this particular respect by various resolutions on Afghanistan. He expected this consensus to be maintained.

He denied in response to another question that the three million Afghan refugees in Pakistan posed internal political problems. He said they had not done so so far. The refugees were "guests" in his country, being given humanitarian assistance and Pakistan's principal concern was that they should be enabled to return home voluntarily in safety and security. This was also the main purpose of Pakistan's participation at the Geneva talks.

Mr Yaqub Khan, who during his visit to Baghdad met Iraqi President Saddam Husayn and Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Tariq Aziz, said he had not gone to Iraq on a mediation mission or with new initiatives for ending the Iran-Iraq war, although the conflict figured at talks he held on a wide range of international issues. His visit was primarily related to bilateral matters and was one of several he had made to Middle East capitals, after taking over as Pakistan's foreign minister. The same applied to his presence during the trip in Jordan with which Pakistan had close and intimate relations. Asked if his travelling back and forth between Baghdad and Amman twice connoted a special purpose, he said this was merely necessitated by airline routes and schedules.

He said he took the opportunity in Baghdad to review bilateral relations in the field of economic and commercial collaboration functioning under the aegis of the joint Iraq-Pakistan commission. He said a number of Pakistani firms remained active in Iraq's development programme, one evidence of which was their very active involvement in construction projects. Pakistan also continued albeit by a circuitious route to export a variety of goods to Iraq. His talks besides covering matters of international concern such as the Middle East issues, the Iran-Iraq war and a review of preparations for the non-aligned summit, also dwelt on possibilities of expanding economic collaboration between the two countries.

Mr Yaqub Khan who was accompanied by a Foreign Ministry delegation was received and seen off at the airport by Pakistani Consul-General in Dubai Abdul Wahab Khan.

BRIEFS

EXPORTS TO IRAN, TURKEY -- Pakistan's exports to Iran and Turkey increased by about RS 818 million during the first six months of current financial year 1982-83 as compared to the exports to these countries during the same period last year, it was learnt yesterday. According to official figures exports to these countries totalled RS1,268.1 million during the first half of the current fiscal year forming 8.9 per cent of the total exports as compared to RS 450.1 million during the same period last year. [Text] [Karachi DAWN in English 19 Feb 83 p 8 GF]

AGREEMENT WITH POLAND -- An agreement has been signed between Pakistan and Poland in Islamabad on 16 February for cooperation between the two countries in culture, sports, education, information, and broadcasting during 1983-84. This agreement replaces the one which expired in September 1982. [Karachi Domestic Service in Urdu 1500 GMT 16 Feb 83 BK]

MUSAVI ON SECURITY COUNCIL CALL FOR CEASE-FIRE

LD231242 Tehran Domestic Service in Persian 1030 GMT 23 Feb 83

[Excerpts] Our correspondent reports that the Cabinet held a session this morning, chaired by Prime Minister Mir-Hoseyn Musavi and discussed issues.

Following today's Cabinet session, the prime minister gave an interview to correspondents. He referred to the resolution of the UN Security Council on a cease-fire between Iran and Iraq: This is the superpowers' view and so far the Islamic Republic of Iran has taken steps contrary to the wishes of the arrogant powers.

He added: The cease-fire issue was raised by the head of the UN Security Council, who is from the Soviet Union. And one can be certain that this resolution represents the views of the major powers with the right of veto in the Security Council. We have announced many times before that we will not surrender to force and bullying and we will continue the war until we achieve our just demands. The fate of the war will be determined by our combatants on the battlefield.

Our correspondent interviewed the prime minister on the issues discussed during today's Cabinet session.

[Begin recording] [Question] Mr Musavi, would you please tell us what issues were raised at today's Cabinet session, and would you please tell us whether any draft bill was approved?

[Answer] In the name of God, the compassionate, the merciful. During today's session, we heard some political reports, a short report from the headquarters reinforcing the imam's decree and there was some discussion on the recent UN Security Council resolution. Some of the brothers taking part in the session had some news including the discussion about the oil issue [as heard] and that the price of North Sea oil has been reduced by $3 and what the effect of this price reduction will be on our economy or our decision-making. Afterward, we had a discussion. Among the important issues worth mentioning was the question of the university jihad. There was some discussion about the university jihad and its achievements.

[Question] In view of the fact that the nonaligned session is to be held this month [Iranian month of Esfand] and in view of the fact that it is being said that Algeria is mediating in the Iran-Iraq war, would you please tell us what will be the result of these efforts and what is Iran's stand with regard to this action?

[Answer] With regard to the Nonaligned Movement, the views of the Iranian Government have been stated before. However, with regard to the mediation and the articles which recently have been written in various newspapers or announced by news agencies, the point worth talking about is that the Islamic Republic has not gone back on its conditions even by a single step and the demands are the same as those previously stated. We are surprised to come across some new statements attributed to responsible authorities of even some friendly countries. We are surprised that such things are said in this manner. We have stated our demand and we will deliver our smashing blows to Saddam's regime. Saddam has reached the stage where he deserves to fall. [end recording]

IRNA Report

GF231640 Tehran IRNA in English 1621 GMT 23 Feb 83

[Text] Tehran, Feb. 23, IRNA -- The Islamic Republic of Iran will not back down from the conditions it has announced for ending the Iraqi imposed war, said Prime Minister Mir-Hoseyn Musavi here Wednesday.

The prime minister was commenting on statements made by officials of certain countries to the effect that the Islamic Republic Government had foregone the conditions it had set forth for ending the Iraqi imposed war. "Statements ascribed to officials of some friendly countries have surprised us." He added the Islamic Republic Government had already brought up the issues and would deal shattering blows on the Iraqi regime because it has committed actions the punishment of which would be nothing short of its eventual fall.

Commenting on bomb explosions in French enterprises outside France, he noted that in the opinion of foreign media these acts have been carried out by opponents of the Iraqi regime and added that there was no further information about it.

Asked to comment on the latest resolution of the United Nation's Security Council calling for an immediate ceasefire in Iraq-Iran war, the draft of which had been prepared by Iraq, Musavi said that the superpowers were interested in a ceasefire while the Islamic Republic of Iran has always acted against the preference of oppressive powers. He continued that the issue of ceasefire was brought up by the president of the council who is from the Soviet Union and that, therefore, it definitely reflected the opinion of the superpowers in the Security Council.

At the end the prime minister reiterated that Islamic Republic Government has repeatedly announced that it would not give in to force and would continue the war until the conditions it has put forward for termination of the war are fulfilled. "The future of the war will be determined by our combatants in the battlefieds," he concluded.

ARMED FORCES JOINT STAFF COMMUNIQUE NO 1,228

LD231748 Tehran Domestic Service in Persian 1630 GMT 23 Feb 83

[Communique No 1,228 of Joint Staff of Armed Forces of Islamic Republic of Iran]

[Text] In His exalted name. During the past 24 hours, Islam's mighty, victorious combatants on the southern fronts continued to open defensive fire and to strengthen their defensive positions while waging battle against the Iraqi Ba'thist mercenaries. They smashed the Iraqi forces' positions and supply lines and inflicted appreciable losses and casualties on the enemy.

In the (Ash-Sharhani) region, they controlled the Iraqi Ba'thist forces and directed heavy artillery fire at an Iraqi reconnaissance unit, thwarting the unit's activities and movements and killing or wounding several Saddamist mercenaries. The remnants of the enemy's reconnaissance troops fled.

During an exchange of fire on the Abadan front, more than 20 Saddamist infidel troops were either killed or wounded thanks to the fire of Islam's combatants.

Gendarmerie combatants, silencing the fire of the Iraqi forces, destroyed several enemy trenches on the opposite bank of the Arvand Rud.

The city of Abadan yesterday continued to be bombarded by the mercenaries of the aggressive Iraqi Army. Four houses were damaged.

On the country's western fronts, sporadic exchanges of artillery and heavy weapons fire continued between our combatants and the Iraqi mercenary forces. In the Mehran sector, the intensity of this exchange was greater than that on other fronts.

On the western fronts, more than 20 trenches of the Iraqi forces were destroyed. Our combatants opened fire on the Saddamist positions and units, halted the movements of the Iraqi forces, and killed or wounded an appreciable number of the enemy.

Yesterday in the Nowsud border region, the exchange of fire was more intense than on previous days. Islam's combatants opened retaliatory fire on the enemy's positions on the other side of the border, silenced enemy fire, killed or wounded several Iraqis, and destroyed several of their light and heavy weapons emplacements.

During the past 24 hours, thanks to the defensive actions of the selfless combatants of the Air Force of the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Iraqi Ba'thist mercenaries were robbed of the capability to launch air raids.

[Signed] Joint Staff of the Armed Forces of the Islamic Republic of Iran

OFFICIAL OUTLINES PLAN FOR POW RELATIVES' VISIT

LD230443 Tehran IRNA in English 0905 GMT 22 Feb 83

[Text] Tehran, Feb 22, IRNA -- The Islamic Republic of Iran, according to a new plan, allows the four first-rank families of every Iraqi POW to come to Iran to visit them, said Kazempur-Ardabili, international undersecretary at the Iranian Foreign Ministry today.

He added that the new plan aimed at neutralizing conspiracies of the Ba'thist regime of Iraq in hindering the visit to Iran of families of over 46,000 Iraqi POWs, totalling about 200,000.

To implement such a humanitarian measure and to avoid any hostility of the Iraqi regime toward families of Iraqi POWS, Iranian embassies have been instructed to pave the way for this visit in the shortest possible period of time, Kazempur-Ardabili noted.

The Iranian embassies, he added, have also been asked to issue only entry slip of these families and avoid formalities concerning their passports, an indication of their tour to Iran.

Further precautionary measures would be taken not to identify those who are willing to visit Iran, the Foreign Ministry official said, adding that the required instructions would be conveyed to Iranian embassies in the next few days.

Kazempur-Ardabili stressed that on Jan. 2 last year Iranian Prime Minister Mir-Hoseyn Musavi announced the Islamic Republic's unprecedented initiative for the tour of relatives of Iraqi POWs to Iran and a commission was formed in this respect.

Although the proposal was approved by the International Red Cross, as an observer to the plan, bottlenecks created by the Iraqi regime hindered its implementation, Kazempur-Ardabili added.

He said that at the time of the announcement of this proposal there were only 7,000 Iraqi POWs in Iran but with the continuation of the war and constant Iraqi defeats, the figure rose to over 46,000. He convinced relatives of the Iraqi POWs that if they come to Iran, from a place other than Baghdad and with programmes coordinated with the Iranian embassies, they could certainly meet their relatives (POWs) and would be warmly welcomed by the Iranians.

He hoped that with the visit of Iraqi POWs' families to Iran, they would realise futility of Baghdad conspiracies hatched to damage credibility of the Islamic Revolution of Iran.

Disabled POW's To Be Released

LD230433 Tehran IRNA in English 0950 GMT 23 Feb 83

[Text] Tehran, Feb. 22, IRNA -- The Islamic Republic of Iran will release a great number of Iraqi crippled POWs unilaterally, the international undersecretary at the Iranian Foreign Ministry Kazempur-Ardabili said here today.

He added that the move was a continuation of the Islamic Republic's humanitarian policies towards the POWs of the Iraqi imposed war on Iran.

As a prelude to this one-sided decision by the Islamic Republic, a group of 32 are ready to be handed over to the International Red Cross and a note has been submitted to the Red Cross bureau in Tehran in this connection.

Commenting on the Iraqi regime's allegations quoting sources at the Turkish Foreign Ministry to the effect that Iran had rejected accepting 23 young POWs, Kazempur-Ardabili said that such allegations were a part of propaganda lies the Iraqi regime was resorting to.

The case has been refuted (?by the) Turkish ambassador to Tehran and also by officials at that country's Foreign Ministry proving futility of such allegations, Kazempur-Ardabili noted.

DPRK VICE FOREIGN MINISTER ARRIVES 22 FEB

LD231743 Tehran IRNA in English 1941 GMT 22 Feb 83

[Text] Tehran, Feb. 22, IRNA -- Deputy foreign minister of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK), Kim Chae-suk, arrived here Tuesday and was welcomed by his Iranian counterpart.

In an interview with IRNA Kim Chae-suk said that the main idea of this visit was to review ways and means for the expansion of mutual ties and cooperation between the DPRK and Iran.

Commenting on the upcoming non-aligned summit conference to be held in New Delhi he said that discussions will be held with the Iranian officials on this matter. He expressed hope that the summit meeting would be based on the principles of the movement which was to create real unity among member countries.

The Korean deputy foreign minister said that the U.S. had launched military maneuvers in conjunction with South Korea since Feb. 1, and that more than 180,000 soldiers from both sides had participated in the operation which was considered the biggest maneuver ever staged. He said such provocative maneuvers have increased the likelihood for the eruption of just another war.

Confers With Counterpart

LD232242 Tehran IRNA in English 1951 GMT 23 Feb 83

[Text] Tehran, Feb. 23 IRNA -- The political deputy of the Foreign Affairs Ministry of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Kim Chae-suk, met and conferred with his Iranian counterpart, Hoseyn Sheykh ol-Eslam, here today.

On the non-aligned summit meet due to be held in New Delhi next month, Kim Chae-suk said that non-aligned members should condemn and thwart the plots of the United States Government throughout the world. He also invited the Iranian president and prime minister to visit DPRK in a near future.

In reply Sheykh ol-Eslam said that the U.S. was trying to prepare the grounds for admission into the summit by a French delegation.

"France is a member of NATO", Sheykh ol-Eslam said, adding that in the opinion of the Iranian Government a government which has provided military base to the U.S. and which has taken part in military maneuvers, is not considered non-aligned. He noted the Islamic Republic Government would present a draft proposal to the summit for creating a healthy atmosphere in the movement.

Sheykh ol-Eslam further referred to the proposal of President 'Ali Khamene'i calling for the establishment of a non-aligned fund, and noted that it was because of economic poverty that [word indistinct] countries are attracted by the superpowers, and that the fund would prevent inclination of such countries towards the superpowers.

'HYPOCRITES' ATTACK GUARDS' VEHICLE IN ESFAHAN

GF231814 Esfahan Domestic Service in Persian 1530 GMT 23 Feb 83

[Statement issued by Esfahan Revolution Guards Corps on 23 February]

[Excerpts] In the name of God, the merciful, the compassionate. At 0730 this morning, the American hypocrites, these godless athiests, wanted to show their American straw-like presence on the scene again and attacked a bus carrying brother revolution guards in Ahmadabad Square in Esfahan. As a result, 11 individuals were wounded, all of whom were passersby and from the martyr-nurturing people. The wounds were superficial but two martyrs were left behind. One of the martyrs was Bahram Sa'idi who was a war refugee and the driver of the minibus. The other martyr was one of the guard brothers, these self-sacrificers who have put their lives on the line for Islam. Rumors circulating about this matter was baseless.

[Signed] Esfahan Islamic Revolution Guards Corps

HASHEMI-RAFSANJANI PRAISES ISLAMIC GUARDS SERVICE

LD151144 Tehran Domestic Service in Persian 1030 GMT 15 Feb 83

[Text] A group of personnel and commanders from the 10th Regional Islamic Revolution Guards Corps [as heard] today met with Majlis Speaker Hashemi-Rafsanjani.

Hashemi-Rafsanjani referred to the conspiracies and difficulties that existed when the corps began its work: All those problems have been solved because of the alertness of the people and the efforts of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps and all the conspiracies have been foiled. The Majlis speaker said: The corps' well-intentioned and martyrdom-seeking force, which unexpectedly surged forth from among the people, has achieved good results and desirable influences. Today, the Armed Forces, the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps, and the Gendarmerie are fighting oppression in unison and on a united front.

Hashemi-Rafsanjani emphasized: According to our new assessments, today, 28 months after the start of the war, we have more forces on the fronts, both from a qualitative and a quantitative point of view. As for supplies, the situation at the front in this respect is better than ever before.

Hashemi-Rafsanjani referred to the activities of city patrol groups of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps in another part of his speech: The activities of the corps' patrol groups forced those waging war against God to flee the cities, and they have been eliminated. Of course, the Islamic Revolution committees have had a great share in these victories, and these successes are all results of popular efforts.

The Majlis speaker finally expressed the hope that with the completion of the war and the corps' activities in solving problems and assisting reconstruction inside the country, this revolutionary institution will continue its services to the people on an even more extended scale.

MINISTER DESCRIBES HIGH MORALE OF ARMED FORCES

LD190043 Tehran IRNA in English 0941 GMT 18 Feb 83

[Text] Karbala HQ, Feb. 17, IRNA -- Minister of the Islamic Revolution's Guards Corps (IRGC), Mohsen Rafiqdust, in an interview with IRNA Wednesday, said that morale of the Islamic Republic forces was high and added that from the point of view of war equipment, Iranian forces enjoyed the best conditions.

He further reiterated that the Iranian forces had come to war fronts to open the way to Karbala and it was not important if this was materialised soon or late.

Commenting on recent exchange of visits between rulers of the region, Rafiqdust said that imperialism and its agents have been trying to encounter [as received] the Iraqi imposed war, which is the war of the victorious Islamic Revolution against infidelity.

Even in Fes conference the participants referred to the Islamic Revolution of Iran as their enemies rather than regarding the Zionist regime as their adversary. This was because these rulers know well that victory of the Islamic Republic in the war would be detrimental to them, he added.

MAJLIS APPROVES COOPERATION BILL WITH ALGERIA

GF211736 Tehran IRNA in English 1657 GMT 21 Feb 83

[Text] Tehran, Feb. 21, IRNA -- In the open session of the Majlis Monday, a bill concerning cultural and technical cooperation between the Islamic Republic of Iran and the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria was approved. Minister of foreign affairs, 'Ali Akbar Velayati, speaking to the deputies about the bill, said that foreign policy of Algeria was close to that of Iran, when compared with other countries.

Continuing his remarks, the foreign minister said that the rational and practical way of establishing relations with other countries was to form these relations on the basis of mutual stances. "We could not find a country in the world adopting stances identical to those of the Islamic Republic of Iran," he added.

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In another part of his speech, which was delivered before the deputies cast their votes on the bill, Velayati thanked the Algerian Government for its role in the Algiers (?accords and) its services during the occupation of the U.S. den of espionage (former U.S. Embassy in Tehran).

Praising the stance taken by the Algerian Government in international circles, he said that the Algerian representative in the United Nations was on the side of the Iranian representative when the latter suggested expulsion of the Zionist regime from the UN. Furthermore, the Algerian foreign minister in a recent interview has made it clear that Algeria would not favour return of Egypt to the Arab community as long as it has not changed its stances. In the same interview the Algerian minister has rejected any compromise with King Hassan of Morocco.

The foreign affairs minister concluded that the agreement would enable both countries to further expand their cultural and scientific relations and exchange their experience in these fields.

NVOI URGES DISMISSAL OF LABOR MINISTER TAVAKKOLI

TA210956 [Editorial Report] The clandestine National Voice of Iran in Persian at 1730 GMT on 19 February carries a commentary entitled: "An Islam Which Leaves Labor Problems Unsolvable -- We Do Not Have Such an Islam." It says: Despite the effort of rightists, superficials, and other defenders of the system of capitalism and exploitation, headed by the hojjatis, to keep in abeyance discussion of the new labor draft and the workers' just demands, in all our homeland's labor circles and workers' gatherings, talk is centering over the draft labor law prepared by Messrs Tavakkoli-Reza'i and the antilabor policy of this minister and his deputy.

While condemning the Tavakkoli-Reza'i labor law draft, our homeland's struggling workers are demanding the dismissal of these defenders of the system of capitalism and exploitation from the Labor Ministry and the appointment of a labor minister who believes in and is committed to the revolution and the toiling masses, and not a defender of the major capitalists. The workers rightly believe that only after the dismissal of Tavakkoli and his partners from the Labor Ministry can one prepare and submit to the Majlis a revolutionary and progressive labor law with the participation of the representatives of the workers.

In the present stage, the struggles of our homeland's workers are rightly aimed at one objective, that is, the drafting of a labor law with the presence of the representatives of the workers themselves. By sending letters and petitions from all over the country to the responsible authorities, our homeland's workers are requesting them to expedite this important and vital matter.

The remarks by Ayatollah Musavi Ardabili, head of the judicial branch, at the seminar studying the Tavakkoli-Reza'i labor law draft should serve as a warning to all committed officials and government figures of the Islamic Republic. In this seminar, Ayatollah Musavi Ardabili said the labor problem must be solved in the country, adding: We don't have an Islam that leaves labor problems unsolvable.